

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /092 W
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R 201823Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5431
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 08319

USEEC AND USCECD ALSO FOR EMBASSIES

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: USO: RALLYING POINT FOR A NON-MARXIST LABOR
MOVEMENT?

1. SUMMARY. SPAIN'S THIRD-RANKED NATIONAL LABOR CON-
FEDERATION, USO, IS MAKING A CALCULATED SHIFT AWAY FROM THE
LEFT AND TOWARD THE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IN AN
ATTEMPT TO RALLY INDEPENDENT LABOR ELEMENTS TO ITS BANNER.
THEY BELIEVE THEIR UNION HAS THE NECESSARY "MYSTIQUE"
(BASED ON CLANDESTINE LABOR ACTIVITY DURING THE FRANCO
ERA) TO PULL THIS OFF. A NUMBER OF THE SPLINTER IN-
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DEPENDENT LABOR ORGANIZATIONS APPEAR INTERESTED, BUT
IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THEY ARE PREPARED TO MEET
USO'S TERMS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN COMPANY BRITISH LABOR ATTACHE, LABATT HAS HAD
OPPORTUNITY MEET WITH USO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS
(ANGEL OTERO, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY; JOSE CORELL,

SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AND UNION RELATIONS) FOR TOUR D'HORIZON OF SPANISH TRADE UNION SCENE. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS THEIR VIEWS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF USO SERVING AS A RALLYING POINT FOR A NON-MARXIST LABOR MOVEMENT, IN DIRECT COMPETITION WITH THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS (CC.OO.) AND THE SOCIALIST UGT.

3. THE USO LEADERS NOTED THAT DESPITE THE COLD SHOULDER TREATMENT GIVEN THEIR UNION BY BOTH THE UGT AND THE CC.OO. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE DECEMBER 1977 CONGRESS MERGING UGT WITH ONE FACTION OF USO (MADRID 77 - 10252), THEIR EMERGENCE AS THE THIRD STRONGEST NATIONAL TRADE UNION IN SPAIN (ADMITTEDLY FAR BEHIND THE "BIG TWO" WITH AN ESTIMATED 6 TO 9 PERCENT OF THE VOTE) FOLLOWING THE RECENT LABOR PLANT ELECTIONS HAD FORCED GOVT, EMPLOYER, AND TRADE UNION SECTORS TO RECOGNIZE THEIR EXISTENCE AFTER ALL. ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THEIR MEMBERSHIP, THEY ASSERTED, HAD ELECTED TO MERGE WITH THE UGT, AND A "REVITALIZED" USO NOW BOASTED A MEMBERSHIP OF CLOSE TO ONE HALF MILLION (PROBABLY A SWOLLEN ESTIMATE). THEY DESCRIBED THIS "NEW USO" AS INDEPENDENT, PLURALIST, AND PROGRESSIVE. LABATT NOTED THAT IN THE PAST, OBSERVERS HAD USUALLY GIVEN USO THE POLITICAL LABEL OF INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST. OTERO RESPONDED THAT

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THEY STILL CONSIDERED THEMSELVES "A CLASS UNION" (SINDICATO DE CLASE), "NOT NECESSARILY SOCIALIST", BUT RATHER "IN FAVOR OF THE WORKING MAN". USO'S MEMBERSHIP COULD THUS INCLUDE POLITICAL SUPPORTERS OF UCD, AP, CARLISTS, AND LEFTISTS. THEY HAD ACCESS TO "A WIDE POLITICAL SPACE" AND WHILE THEY WISHED TO BE INDEPENDENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES, THEY WERE BY NO MEANS APOLITICAL -- "FAR FROM IT." USO WANTED TO APPEAL TO ANY "REAL WORKER", AND POLITICAL LABELS WERE A SECONDARY CONSIDERATION.

4. LABATT ASKED THE USO LEADERS BLUNTLY WHETHER THEY VISUALIZED THEIR UNION AS A POSSIBLE RALLYING POINT FOR A CENTER-ORIENTED LABOR MOVEMENT AS ENVISAGED BY UCD (REFTEL A). AFTER A MOMENT OF HESITATION AND A QUICK EXCHANGE OF GLANCES WITH HIS COLLEAGUE, OTERO SAID THAT YES -- QUITE FRANKLY -- USO WAS MAKING A BIG DRIVE TO HERD THE "INDEPENDENTS" INTO THE USO CORRAL. HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, CHOOSE TO USE THE LABEL "CENTER-ORIENTED", AND REMARKED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT ARTURO MOYA'S PROPOSED FOUNDATION FOR LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COULD LEAD TO ANY "REAL LABOR MOVEMENT".

USO FELT THAT THEY AND THE INDEPENDENTS HAD A COMMON DESIRE NOT TO BE MANIPULATED BY POLITICAL PARTIES, AND THAT INCLUDED THE UCD GOVT PARTY. THUS, THEY WERE OF THE OPINION THAT USO COULD WELL BE THE RALLYING POINT FOR A UNIFICATION OF INDEPENDENT LABOR FORCES. THEIR UNION HAD THE NECESSARY "MYSTIQUE" (BASED ON ITS CLANDESTINE LABOR ACTIVITY DURING THE FRANCO REGIME) TO PULL THIS OFF, WHEREAS THE SPLINTER ORGANIZATIONS OF INDEPENDENTS (SEE REFTEL B) HAD TOO MANY "PERSONALITY PROBLEMS" TO BE ABLE TO UNITE AMONG THEMSELVES. CORELL CONFIDED THAT THE TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT INDEPENDENT SPLINTER ORGANIZATIONS -- CDT AND CTI -- HAD ALREADY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MADRID 08319

USEEC AND USCECD ALSO FOR EMBASSIES

BEEN TALKING UNITY WITH USO. HOWEVER, USO WAS INSISTING THAT ANY UNITY BE ACCOMPLISHED UNDER THE USO BANNER, KEEPING THE USO TRADITIONS. FURTHERMORE, USO HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING AN ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORK OF MILITANTS READY TO OPERATE IN ALL PROVINCES.

5. COMMENT. IT APPEARS THAT USO IS GOING ALL OUT TO

HARVEST THE RICH CROP OF "INDEPENDENTS" THAT SURFACED
IN THE RECENT PLANT ELECTIONS. TO MAKE THEMSELVES
ACCEPTABLE TO AS BROAD A POLITICAL SPECTRUM AS POSSIBLE,
THEY HAVE UNABASHEDLY ABANDONED THEIR EARLIER
"INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST" TAG IN FAVOR OF A MORE GENERAL
"PLURALIST" DESIGNATION. IT IS WORTH RECALLING THAT
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WHEN ASKED ABOUT HIS OPINION OF USO, UCD LEADER ARTURO
MOYA ASSERTED THAT USO DID NOT REPRESENT WHAT HE
TERMED "DOCTRINAIRE SOCIALISTS", AND THAT THE UNION'S
EARLIER CHRISTIAN COLORATION MIGHT ENABLE IT TO "JOIN"
(READ "LEAD" ?) A CENTER-ORIENTED LABOR MOVEMENT.

6. WHILE THE UGT WOULD ALSO LIKE TO CAPTURE SOME OF
THE UNAFFILIATED INDEPENDENT ELEMENTS, THEY HAVE
PROBABLY EFFECTIVELY SABOTAGED THEMSELVES IN THIS
RESPECT. NOT ONLY HAVE THEY EMPHASIZED THEIR STRONG
SOCIALIST (I.E. PSOE) POLITICAL TIES, THEY HAVE ALSO
(ALONG WITH CC.OO.) TARRED THE INDEPENDENT SPLINTER
GROUPS WITH THE "YELLOW UNION" BRUSH. ALTHOUGH NOT IN
ANY SENSE TO BE COMPARED TO UGT OR CC.OO., USO STILL
HAS A MODEST BUT REASONABLY EFFECTIVE NATIONWIDE
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE WHICH COULD PROVIDE THE
BASIS FOR A THIRD MAINSTREAM LABOR MOVEMENT. WE
NOTE THAT THE SPLINTER INDEPENDENT LABOR ORGANIZA-
TIONS ARE HOPING TO CONVOKE A "COORDINADORA" BY
THE END OF THIS MONTH, FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF
CREATING A NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT
UNIONS. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHETHER THEY
ASK USO TO JOIN THEM. TODMAN

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